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Zoo welcomes new giraffe

ABILENE, TEXAS – More giraffe have joined the herd at the Abilene Zoo, and guests could get a peek at the new animals soon.

Two adult females, Sunny and Jamie, moved to Abilene from the Dallas Zoo Feb. 29 and slowly have been introduced to Abilene's other giraffe.

"They've been interested in getting to know each other, and we expect everyone to get along," said Executive Director Bill Gersonde. "These two ladies grow our herd to six -- a good sized group for Giraffe Safari."



Sunny is almost 7 years old and was born at the White Oak Conservation Center in Florida, while Jamie is nearly 5 years old and was born in Dallas. Both are reticulated giraffe, but guests will be able to distinguish between the two because Sunny's coloring is darker.

The zoo's giraffe have been off exhibit while the new Giraffe Safari exhibit has been under construction; however, zoo keepers plan to introduce the animals to the new space soon.

"Giraffe tend to be cautious about new experiences, so we'll be watching to see how quickly they decide to explore their new home," Gersonde said.

Guests will be able to see the animals on exhibit, but they won't be able to feed the giraffe until Giraffe Safari opens to the public April 23.

As the zoo prepares to open its new Giraffe Safari exhibit next month, it has grown its herd from two females, Asha and Punk, to include a male Rothschild giraffe named Mesi, as well as a new young calf and these two new adult females.

About the Abilene Zoo: The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 1000 animals of 250 different species. The zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085.

Mission Statement: The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.